

Here is what happened

She was fifteen years old. She had
to pay for college. She had to pay
for this. She came to my apartment
on a Saturday afternoon. Her parents
didn't know. I didn't know her parents.
Her girlfriends brought her up
the stairs, holding on to her hands.
They wanted to help. I told them,
Go; get orange juice.

She was five months pregnant.
Two days before, we reached
up inside, pushed down outside.
She breathed out like fire,
she gushed out salty water.
She was lucky it came soon:
Saturday, no school, girlfriends
who lied for her. When she called,
contractions starting, I said, *Come over.*

She sat on the floor. She bent her knees.
She rocked and pushed and rocked
inside contractions: they were close.
We were close. I never saw her again.

Her name was Rachel. She said, *I don't
want to see it.* When I took it away,
she cried. I washed her body, fresh
water, holding her like the girlfriends.
She drank her juice. She took her medicine.
I drove her to a corner two blocks
from her house. She walked home
from there *Because, she said, you know.*
She touched my shoulder: *Thank you.*